



Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC) Update to the Community – May 2016

End Homelessness Winnipeg

As many of you know, the WPRC has been focussed on homelessness since 2012. The *Plan to End Homelessness* was released in 2014. It recommended the development of a new organization to focus on coordinating homelessness efforts, with a goal of ending homelessness in Winnipeg. In June 2015 the first board meeting of the new organization, End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW), was held. And in September 2015, Louis Sorin was hired as President and CEO. Louis is in the process of building a EHW staff team and making plans to take possession of office space on the corner of King and Pacific.

Until the EHW staff is in place, WPRC staff have been providing support to get the work of EHW underway, including helping to develop and coordinate two working groups; one on housing supply and one on housing supports. In these groups, community stakeholders from all sectors come together to develop strategies which will move the work of EHW forward.

This is just the start. As EHW develops, all the complex and varied aspects of tackling homelessness will become part of the role.

Bridges to Employment

With the launch of End Homelessness Winnipeg, the WPRC began to think about a new focus for the future. The 'Framework for Action', first created in 2008, was updated for 2015-2020 to include ten "aspirations for Winnipeg".

The ten aspirations for Winnipeg are strongly interconnected in that achieving significant progress on any one will positively impact the others. Because income is most often at the root of poverty, WPRC members reasoned that a focus on *independence through income* could be the Council's next priority.

In the fall of 2015 WPRC staff carried out community consultations to test and further explore this assumption and to ask for ideas on how WPRC could best address the issue of 'income'. Eight groups with a total of 73 people participated in the consultations. Sectors represented were Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations, Resource Centres, mental health, financial empowerment, Government of Manitoba, WRHA, Indigenous and newcomer leaders, advocacy and public policy research, and the business community.

We'd like to thank everyone who participated in the consultations. Your ideas and opinions were thoughtful and invaluable to charting our course.

Through the consultations, we heard general agreement that the WPRC's focus on 'income' could have an impact on poverty in Winnipeg. We also heard many ideas about potential strategies and we reviewed them all. In the end, considering the role of WPRC, the principles of Collective Impact and a review of the literature and demographics, WPRC landed on **Bridges to Employment** as a strategy to address income.

Bridges to Employment is about building relationships that will support people moving from training to employment. Working with trainers, educators and employers we will look for models to bridge the gap between training and good jobs. Because WPRC membership includes trainers, educators, employers, Indigenous community leaders, government and other community leaders, it is in a good position to move this issue forward through a Collective Impact approach.

We also heard from the consultations that there are populations that are particularly important to income and jobs as they relate to poverty. With that in mind WPRC intends to focus primarily within the Indigenous population, and particularly on Indigenous youth, for Bridges to Employment.

Currently, WPRC is working with community members and strategic partners to further develop what Bridges to Employment might look like, with the goal of developing a course of action in the coming months.

Other important themes

Although linking people to employment was chosen as the primary focus for WPRC, there were other important themes that came up in the consultations. They included:

- 'Pre-pre-employment' - addressing barriers (such as mental illness, food security, addictions, historic trauma, housing) and stabilizing income for those not ready to enter training or the labour market
- Developing and delivering a public awareness strategy about poverty
- Expanding financial empowerment services
- Cross-government policy integration, and addressing factors leading to the 'welfare wall'

These themes were not chosen as the top priority for WPRC because, out of the suggestions raised, they did not have the best potential within the WPRC role and Collective Impact approach. But that does not diminish their importance to poverty reduction, and WPRC with United Way Winnipeg is committed to building awareness and supporting initiatives that address these issues. For example, the new Family Resource Centre Initiative through United Way Winnipeg will bring significant new capacity to resource centres for their work with people who have multiple barriers. As well, United Way Winnipeg is working with SEED Winnipeg and others to develop a network of organizations providing financial empowerment services.



WPRC as partner

WPRC recognizes that there is a strong and experienced community of organizations in Winnipeg working on poverty reduction whether through community development, community economic development, advocacy or in other ways. WPRC supports and strives to work in partnership with all efforts in the important work of fighting poverty in our city.

We believe that regular and clear communication is important to building partnerships across the community. To that end, we are working on renewing WPRC processes and definitions, and developing new communication tools including a web site refresh and social media presence.

Please contact WPRC staff with any questions or concerns, at the contact information below.

Members of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council

Dave Angus (co-chair) – President and CEO, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Cynthia Foreman (co-chair) – Retired, Federal Public Servant

Chino Argueta – Community Representative, millennials

Ron Brown – President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg

Angie Bruce – Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Family Services, Manitoba Government

Rita Chahal – Executive Director, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council

Bob Christmas – Winnipeg Police Service

Pauline Clarke – Chief Superintendent, Winnipeg School Division

Chief Devon Clunis – Chief, Winnipeg Police Service

Joy Cramer – Deputy Minister of Family Services, Manitoba Government

Jorge Fernandez – Executive Director, Immigrant Centre

Marti Ford – Area 3 Superintendent, Frontier School Division

Dr. Sande Harlos – Medical Officer of Health, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Sherri Helgason – Director, National Aboriginal Initiative, Canadian Human Rights Commission

Paul Holden – President and CEO, Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Dina Juras – Regional Director, Public Health Agency of Canada

Sherman Kreiner – Managing Director, Community Renewal Corporation, University of Winnipeg

Kate Kehler – Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Edward Kennedy – Chairman and CEO, North West Company

Susan Lewis – Retired, President United Way Winnipeg

Don Leitch – President and CEO, Business Council of Manitoba

Dan Lussier – CEO, Catholic Health Corporation of Manitoba

Dr. Sharon Macdonald – Retired, College of Medicine, University of Manitoba

Marilyn McLaren – Retired, CEO Manitoba Public Insurance

Dr. Jim Mulvale – Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba



John Neufeld – Lead Pastor, The Meeting Place

David Northcott – Executive Coordinator, Winnipeg Harvest

Dr. Brian Postl – Dean, Faculty of Medicine and of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba

Kimberley Puhach – Director of Human Resources, Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Strini Reddy – Retired, Teacher

Carinna Rosales – Director, Business Development Services, SEED Winnipeg

Jan Sanderson – Former Deputy Minister, Children and Youth Opportunities, CEO, Healthy Child Manitoba

Milton Sussman – President and CEO, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Paul Vogt – President and CEO, Red River College

Connie Walker – President and CEO, United Way Winnipeg

Clive Wightman – Director, Community Services, City of Winnipeg

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